



MQF Level 7  
60 ECTS PGDip  
120 ECTS Masters

Post Graduate Diploma  
and Masters in  
Systemic Family Psychotherapy

**Prospectus** 2024 - 2026 PGDip  
2025 – 2027 Masters

Welcome to the  
Institute of Family Therapy  
Malta

## INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

*We would like to welcome you to the Institute of Family Therapy - Malta. We hope that this prospectus will answer most of your questions and helps you make this important decision in your life and career.*

The fundamental aim of the training is to expose trainees to a specialised training in the practice of evidence-based systemic psychotherapy. The training enables professionals from mental health, education, social work, psychology, youth studies, psychiatry, clergy, and related disciplines to build on their existing knowledge and skills and to develop an understanding of the theories informing family therapy and systemic practice, and translate them into effective systemic psychotherapy, thus enriching their role as mental health practitioners with individuals, couples, families, and organisations. An emphasis is placed on preparing students to adapt their practice to fit within a range of cultural, socio-economic and professional settings, both public and private. The training thus draws from a wide range of theoretical paradigms and practice approaches to enable students to meet the demands of working with a wide range of client groups in both adult and child focused settings.

The Masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy is an advanced course that meets the practitioners' training criteria of the European Family Therapy Association and the International Family Therapy Association. Students can opt to sit for the first two years of the Masters and exit with a Post Graduate Diploma in systemic family psychotherapy. It is only upon completing the four years training that trainee will achieve the award of Masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy. Only the Masters Award entitles the holder for application for warranting as Psychotherapist with the Psychotherapy Profession Board.

This is a Part Time training course and together, the Post Graduate Diploma and the Masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy spread over four calendar years and are available for those working within a wide range of mental health, educational, legal, management. and other settings in the social sector. Teaching includes seminars, small group teaching, clinical skills development groups, and personal and professional development groups. Because of the nature of the course, there is ample contact with course staff and opportunities for individual support.

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Because this is a specialised training equipping trainees to engage with vulnerable clients, IFT - Malta reserves the right to pause or stop any trainee from pursuing their training should the continuation of such training be to the detriment of the trainees themselves, other trainees or clients involved.

Course fee for the Diploma is EURO 3,900 per year. Course fee for the Masters is EURO 7,900 per year. This price is comprehensive and includes all your tuition, supervision, and library access. There are no other extra fees or hidden costs. Deposit

payment is required upon acceptance on the course (see application form for details). Those applying for these programs will be eligible to apply for various government scholarship schemes when launched. Both Diploma and Masters training are included in the Get Qualified Scheme and can benefit from 70% refund after completion. Course payments are to be made in instalments as indicated upon acceptance.

This course is accredited by the Malta Further and Higher Education Authority and carries the Post Graduate Diploma in Systemic Family Psychotherapy (two years) and Masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy (four years). This Award is issued by the Institute of Family Therapy - Malta and is a recognised Malta Qualifications Framework (MQF) Level 7 training. The MQF levelling is part of the European Qualification Framework (EQF) and thus the qualifications are recognised across Europe. The Institute of Family Therapy- Malta is a licensed Education and training provider (License no: 2001-TC-014) within the National Quality Assurance Framework for Further and Higher Education.

To apply please visit website [www.ift-malta.com](http://www.ift-malta.com) or enquire on [info@ift-malta.com](mailto:info@ift-malta.com) or [+356 79823572](tel:+35679823572).

## TRAINING AIMS

The Post Graduate Diploma in Systemic Family Psychotherapy has specific training aims which will be:

- Enabling trainees to obtain a broad spectrum of knowledge and understanding of theories informing clinical work with couples, families, and individuals.
- Enabling trainees to develop clinical skills to engage, assess, and intervene effectively with diverse client populations within a multidisciplinary setting.
- Enabling students to critically evaluate research and advanced scholarship in the field of family psychotherapy, and to conduct quality research therein.
- Empowering trainees towards increased self-reflexivity and enhanced relationship between the personal and the professional.
- Enabling students to integrate their learning into their own professional practice and to be able to consider evidence-based practice in developing appropriate and ethical interventions.

The Masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy programme aims to enable students to continue building on existing knowledge, skills and experience in their respective field and to provide them with the opportunity to develop the competence to practice evidence based systemic family psychotherapy. Specifically, the training aims at:

- Training professionals as systemic psychotherapists.
- Enabling professionals to work systemically with individuals, couples, families and organisations.

- Equipping professionals as teachers of systemic principles and enable them to help other professionals to apply systemic concepts to their particular working context.
- Equipping professionals to become research practitioners.
- Training professionals towards reflexive practice.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of the Post Graduate Diploma in Family Therapy trainees should be able to demonstrate by active participation, written projects and clinical case presentations that they meet the standard of competence required of a systemic family worker at intermediate level as recommended by the European Family Therapy Association and its code of ethical practice.

Upon completion of the Postgraduate Diploma, trainees shall have acquired the following knowledge and competencies:

- A good understanding of the historical development of systemic family therapy
  - Knowledge of the different schools and theories of change within the systemic framework and able to take a critical approach to literature
  - A basic understanding of the systemic epistemology
  - Link the theory to their working context.
  - Develop a comprehensive understanding of the self through self-reflexivity and its application to systemic family therapy
  - Equip trainees with basic skills enabling them to assess personal value, knowledge, skills and competencies.
  - Acquainted with systemic nature of problems and systemic methods used to resolve them
  - Practice with developing a systemic conceptualisation of problems within their working context.
  - Able to practice systemic skills and techniques within one's working context.
  - Knowledge of the different research paradigms
  - Acquaint themselves with a variety of research methods and able to apply them
  - Well able to evaluate research papers
- Upon completion of the Masters, trainees should have acquired:
- An ability to understand and explore the implications of adherence to EFTA's (European Family Therapy Association) Code of Ethics and Practice for both individuals and organisations in particular the implications for a commitment

towards anti-discriminatory, culture, race, class, religion, sexual orientation, age, disability, and gender sensitive practice.

- Familiar with the Maltese legislation that regulates the psychotherapy profession
- The capacity to demonstrate an increased awareness of the systemic impact of the wider social context on self and client especially in respect of race, class, religion, culture, gender, sexual orientation, age and disability.
- A basic understanding of the key theories in the Systemic Approach to family, couple, and other relationships problems and the ability to describe differences and similarities between approaches in systemic therapy including their respective theories of change and their specific techniques.
- The knowledge to locate family therapy within a historical context of a developing field as well as to contextualise family therapy within the broad context of therapeutic approaches and their continuous development.
- The knowledge and demonstration of the ability to use a wide spectrum of practice skills required to engage with a wide range of client groups and to work with them effectively using a variety of therapeutic models and therapeutic techniques within the systemic framework.
- The knowledge and demonstration of the application of systemic skills in their current work practice.
- To understand the role of systemic family therapy and other family interventions within a multidisciplinary team and the broader delivery of services to children, adults, couples and families' mental health.
- Knowledge about a range of seminal literature relating to family therapy and systemic practice and an ability to describe a range of systemic models, therapeutic approaches, and techniques, and give examples of their application to practice with different client needs.
- An ability to discuss systemic practice in oral and written form and to communicate clearly and unambiguously with both colleagues and non-colleagues, specialist and non-specialist audiences.
- An ability to describe and critique the concept of the family life cycle perspective and its application to different family forms including knowledge about the key developmental processes occurring within families, couples, individuals and organisations.
- An ability to use theory critically and to critically explore ideas, values, and their applicability to different individuals, couples, families and organisations.
- An ability to reflect on personal processes and their relevance to personal and professional development and clinical practice, as well as being able to account for the personal learning and relational changes trainees themselves undergo over time during the training, including the ability to consider their own personal, family and cultural experiences from a systemic perspective.
- Ability to demonstrate the achievement of an advanced standard of knowledge and its application to research

## COURSE MODULES OVER THE FOUR YEARS

Reflecting the current understanding of what constitutes good training practice and in line with European criteria for good training, this training programme consists of fourteen modules (as indicated in the above table) representing the most indispensable areas of professional competence and personal development as Systemic Family Psychotherapists. The modules are the following:

### Post Graduate Diploma — Year 1

Module/ Unit Title	Compulsory or Elective	ECTS	Mode of Teaching	Mode of Assessment
Introduction to Systemic Family Therapy: History & Development	Compulsory	10	Lectures, Role Playing, Video Presentations	Discussion Participation 50% Assignment 2000 words 50%
Personal & Professional Development 1	Compulsory	5	Lectures, Role Plays, Video Presentations	Written Reflective Assignment 2500 words 100%
Basic Clinical Skills & Systemic Competences	Compulsory	10	Lecture, Role Plays, Video Review, Video Presentations, Experiential/ Practice workshops, Clinical Reflexivity Groups	Critical reflexive analysis of a Role Play 3000 words 100%
Research Practices	Compulsory	5	Lectures, Research Reviews, Peer Discussion, Presentations	Developing a 3000 word evaluative critique of a Research Paper chosen from a proposed selection offered by tutor

## Post Graduate Diploma — Year 2

Module/ Unit Title	Compulsory or Elective	ECTS	Mode of Teaching	Mode of Assessment
Contemporary Models of Systemic Family Therapy	Compulsory	10	Lectures, Role Plays, Video Presentations	Discussion Participation 50% Assignment 50%
Personal & Professional Development 2	Compulsory	5	Lectures, Role Plays, Video Presentations	Written Assignment 1,500 words 50% Creative preparation and Presentation of PPD Journey 50%
Advanced Clinical Skills & Competences	Compulsory	10	Lecture, Role Plays, Video Review, Video Presentations, Experiential/ Practice workshops, Clinical Reflexivity Groups workshops	Video presentation with critical analysis 50% Retrospective Reflexive Analysis of the presentation process and content 1,500 words 50%
Qualitative & Systemic Research Practices	Compulsory	5	Clinical Reflexivity Groups	Written 2,000 word Research Proposal 50% Presentation of Research to peers and tutors 50%



## Masters — Year 3

Module/ Unit Title	Compulsory or Elective	ECTS	Mode of Teaching	Mode of Assessment
Special Populations and Themes in Family Therapy & Systemic Practice	Compulsory	5	Lectures, Role Plays, Video Presentations	1,500 Written Critical Review 50%  Lecture/ Presentation of Selected Topic 50%
PPD 3	Compulsory	5	Lectures, Role Plays, Video Presentations	Written PPD Portfolio 3,000 words 100%
Core Practicum 1	Compulsory	10	Involves the practice of reflexive practice under in a team of 3 students supervised live by an expert supervisor	Reflexive Evaluative Analysis journal 3,000 words 100%
Systemic & Cultural Perspectives on Mental Health & Mental Illness	Compulsory	5	Lectures, Research Reviews, Peer Discussion, Presentations	Position Paper 1,500 word 50%  Presentation to colleagues and tutors 50%

## Masters — Year 4

Module/ Unit Title	Compulsory or Elective	ECTS	Mode of Teaching	Mode of Assessment
Core Practicum 2	Compulsory	10	Involves the practice of reflexive practice in a team of 3 students supervised live by an expert supervisor	Video presentation with Critical and Reflexive analysis of Therapy Session with real clients in front of examining panel 100%
Dissertation (Work on the dissertation is expected to start in the third year of studies and continues up to the end of the course)	Compulsory	25	Lecture, Discussion, Data Gathering, Presentations, Research Supervision, Log Keeping, Peer Group Discussion and Review	Research Dissertation 12,000 words 100%

## ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The Masters level training aims to meet the needs of a broad range of professionals with relevant backgrounds such as nursing, social work, psychology, psychiatry, teaching, counselling, human resources, management, etc.

Entry to PG Diploma training requires applicants to present:

- A relevant professional training, or an equivalent 1st degree in a human sciences subject at level 6 MQF.
- One year Post Graduate work experience in a relevant field.
- Post Graduate Diploma in systemic Family Psychotherapy (for Master's)
- A Curriculum Vitae
- Two recent reference letters
- An original and recent copy of a clean Police Conduct Certificate.

In order to maximise access to training in systemic practice entry to Masters training requires applicants to present:

- A relevant professional training, or an equivalent 1st degree in a human sciences subject
- An opportunity to apply systemic ideas to a current work setting (Students may need to find other opportunities, perhaps on a placement basis. Assistance will be given to find alternative placements if needed.)
- Post Graduate Diploma in Systemic Family Psychotherapy IFT-Malta
- A Curriculum Vitae
- A recent reference letter
- An original and recent copy of a clean Police Conduct Certificate.

All applicants for the training will be interviewed.

## STAFF STRUCTURE

### Core Tutors

Dr. Charlie Azzopardi B.psy.(Hons.) M.Sc. (UOL) Doct. Sys. Psych. (UEL)

Ms. Karen Bishop B.Psy. (Hons.), M.Sc. (UEL)

Ms. Yanica Richards Chircop B.Psy. (Hons.), M. Sys. Psych. (IFT-Malta)

### PG Dip Coordinator

Ms. Yanica Richards Chircop B.Psy. (Hons.), M. Sys. Psych. (IFT-Malta)

### Masters Coordinator & Supervisor

Ms. Karen Bishop B.Psy. (Hons.), M.Sc. (UEL)

### IFT-Malta Chair

Dr. Charlie Azzopardi B.psy.(Hons.) M.Sc. (UOL) Doct. Sys. Psych. (UEL)

### Consultant

Dr. Charlie Azzopardi B.psy.(Hons.) M.Sc. (UOL) Doct. Sys. Psych. (UEL)

## TIME COMMITMENT

The Masters in Systemic Family Psychotherapy comprises four years of training (two years with PG Dip exit point & two years of Masters) and is based on European standard requirements for systemic family therapy training as set by EFTA (European Family Therapy Association). It meets the legal warranting requisites of the Psychotherapy Profession Board and is accredited by the Malta Further & Higher Education Authority.

The training runs for a total of 3000 hours over four years. 1500 hours over two years for the PG Diploma exit point spread over monthly weekend blocks and 1500 hours of monthly weekend blocks of one day (normally Saturdays), and a weekly 4 hour clinic at IFT-Malta held on a weekday afternoon for the Masters. Additional 10 - 15 hours, approximately, of weekly reading and preparation of assignments are required.

After the successful termination of the four years of Masters training, the holder may register as a psychotherapist with the Warranting Board regulating the profession in Malta.

For more information please contact IFT-Malta:

Secretary — **marika.azzopardi@ift-malta.com**

Email — **info@ift-malta.com**

Call — **+356 79823572**

A detailed program of studies and time table will be given upon acceptance.